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E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/19/2015

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SUBJECT: MUQTADA AL-SADR VISITS JORDAN

REF: A. STATE 27111

- IB. 04 AMMAN 03801
- IC. 04 AMMAN 02069
- ID. 04 AMMAN 01970
- IE. 04 STATE 55050
- IF. TD-314/46280-05
- IG. TD-314/46286-05
- IH. TD-314/46312-05
- II. TD-314/46263-05

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DAVID HALE FOR REASONS 1.4 (b and d).

I1. (U) Muqtada al-Sadr visited Jordan February 17-19 for meetings with the King and Prime Minister, and to visit shrines venerated by Shiites. According to press reports, the King told Sadr that Jordan was eager to protect Iraq's unity, and stressed the importance of the political process and of representative and non-sectarian government. Sadr, who arrived in Jordan Thursday after visits to Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia, publicly praised Jordan's efforts to help the Iraqi people and the King's international efforts to promote "true" Islam. After meeting with PM Bakhit, Sadr told reporters that the incoming Iraqi government should make it a priority to obtain a timetable for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq.

I2. (S) The chief of Jordan's General Intelligence Directorate, Muhammad Dhahabi, told Ambassador February 19 that during his meeting with King Abdullah, Sadr listened politely to the King's points on the need for all Iraqi politicians to push for a government of national unity, to avoid further fueling the fires of sectarianism, and to beware of Iran's influence and the dangers it poses to Iraqis and all Arabs. In contrast, Sadr was less reticent at a dinner later that evening at the home of the Royal Court's Imam Ahmed Hilayel and attended by a number of senior Jordanians, and in his other meetings here. According to Dhahabi, Sadr lectured his hosts on Jordan's past relationship with Saddam, and suggested too many Jordanians, sympathies remained with Iraq's Baathists or with other forces responsible for killing Shia civilians. Dhahabi said that Sadr's complaints included Jordan's hosting of two of Saddam's daughters.

I3. (S) NOTE: As reported refs, Jordan's security services closely watch the two daughters, Raghad and Rana, who have been living in Amman since 2003, in order to ensure that they do not engage in any activity that could potentially embarrass the GOJ, including support for the insurgency. Ref A did not arrive in time for delivery prior to Sadr's reception, but the King has kept relevant Department officials apprised of his desire to explore ways to try to get Sadr to act in a more constructive fashion. END NOTE.  
HALE